



# CONSUMERS' GUIDE

OCTOBER 24, 1938



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D. E. MONTGOMERY, Consumers' Counsel**

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MARY TAYLOR, Editor

WE'LL have to leave it to somebody else, who has more time for the job than we, to make a road map of all the organized consumer activities abroad in the land. Every mail brings us news of more. Very soon we will begin to suspect that study and work on common consumer problems is becoming THE major enterprise of organized women everywhere. Certainly the pace of this movement keeps us breathless.

Farm women are at it! We highlighted in our last issue a report of their consumer activities. Now comes a report from an important national organization of women, with locals mostly in cities, telling how its members are getting to grips with consumer problems.

Here's a group in Illinois that spent a year studying how to buy intelligently, and then to share what they learned with their community, they staged a playlet, called "Shoppers' Heyday." It covered the advantages in buying U. S. graded meats and canned goods, and showed the desirability of informative labeling for hosiery, dresses, and cosmetics. "Supplementing the playlet was an exhibit of graded foods, clothing with informative labels, information about silk and rayon, foods bearing the American Medical Association label, U. S. graded meats, dentifrices bearing the American Dental Association label, posters, data, and reference material obtained from many sources; also, a cosmetic display." So much interest was stirred

up by this program that a new Consumer Center is being established at a nearby University where there will be a permanent exhibit room open to everyone interested in consumer information.

Still another group tells about an exhibit they put on. "We studied consumer questions for 2 years," they report, "before we attempted the exhibit, and even then we included nothing which we had not studied thoroughly. . . . We assign a subject to each member in the fall and each girl has anywhere from a month to 8 months to work up her topic. At each meeting we all take notes on the report and feel that we have the findings of an expert. Just as an example, last year my report was on china and earthenware. On that subject I read no less than 40 books; I have visited 2 potteries and have seen china made from mixing clay up to decoration. . . . I have run tests to see the hardness of the paste and have studied the Bureau of Standards' reports."

In Tennessee, the work on consumer education done by this group of women in one city led to the organization of a Consumers' Council in which representatives of 7 women's organizations and some men's groups are now working out their consumer problems.

Some branches of this organization have been pushing for municipal ordinances on such subjects as weights and measures and the marketing of milk. Some make surveys of existing consumer services of their local govern-

ments. In California, groups lucky enough to include scientifically trained women, have undertaken laboratory work to develop tests for various commodities. Through original research, they have developed "ideal" labels for canned goods and fabrics which were sent to 100 firms for criticism. A Kansas group made a study of price and quality differences and shrinkage in sheetings and other household fabrics. Actual tests were made, and each member kept a definite record of fabric performance during the year. Twelve local branches made tests to determine quality differences in various brands of canned foods.

Individuals in several groups kept records of the information they were able to secure from sales people when purchasing in retail stores; others checked advertising claims on certain household articles against performance of these articles in their homes. From these records, the groups have drafted recommendations for more accurate buying information. In practically all these activities it was necessary to establish a cooperative relationship with the retailers in the community. . . .

We welcome—even if it does keep us hopping—the news our mailbox brings of every organized consumer effort to bring about less wasteful and more efficient merchandising of the necessities of life. Tell us about yours!

● **FOUR ERRORS** crept into our copy for the Fifth Anniversary issue (September). We tried to keep them all out, but alas! Here they are; if you still have your copy of this issue, it would be a good plan to insert them on the appropriate pages:

Page 9: Fourth line from the bottom, total cash income should read \$724,000,000—not \$724,000. Also: The footnote to the chart on this page should read "Each bill represents 1 dollar," not 2 dollars.

Page 41: The footnote to the chart on this page should read "Each bill represents \$5"—not 5 percent of total income.

Page 45: Captions to the chart on this page should be reversed. Black figures represent those "Below \$1,000"; gray figures represent those "Above \$1,000."

# How High Is Your Consumer I. Q.?

3

*Here's a contest to help you rate your consumer intelligence on the importance of weights and measures in buying*

**TRY** your luck in answering these questions. Each one is intended to help you clinch a fact you should know if you want to be a careful buyer. At the back of this issue you will find a blank form on which to record your wisdom. So that you can see how well your Consumer I. Q. compares with that of others, fill in the blank form, tear it out, and mail it to us.

Three outstanding authorities on weights and measures have agreed to judge all entries in this contest. They are Mr. George Warner, Chief Inspector, Wisconsin State Bureau of Weights and Measures; Mr. Joseph G. Rogers, Assistant State Superintendent of Weights and Measures, Trenton, New Jersey; and Mr. B. W. Ragland, Chief of the Bureau of Weights and Measures, Richmond, Virginia.

As a reward to the best contestant, we were all set to announce the highest in our power to give—mention in the *Consumers' Guide*. We thought that reward would be sufficient to engulf us in a flood of entries, but before we could get to press, came a letter from Mr. Ragland saying that the Virginia Weights and Measures Association "would be pleased to offer a kitchen scale" for a first prize. We leave it to the 3 judges to bestow this extra award so generously and spontaneously offered by the Virginia association. Our own award will still be announcement of the winner, together with the list of correct answers to the questions, in the *Guide* as soon after the close of the contest as possible.

Two credits will be given to each correct answer. There are 40 questions in all. A perfect record on all 40, therefore, would total 80 points. Another 10 credits each can be won for composing original, correct, and effective conclusions to the 2 uncompleted sentences given at the end of the contest. That makes a possible total of 100 points.

No officials or employees of Weights and Measures offices are eligible to compete in this consumer game. Nor are any employees of the Consumers' Counsel Division of the AAA or of the National Bureau of Standards. Everybody else is welcome! Get out your old copies of the *Consumers' Guide*. Answers to many of the questions have already appeared in its pages. If the *Guide* doesn't give you all the help you need, you might call on your local Weights and Measures official and talk things over with him. We won't call that unfair consumer competition.

There has to be a deadline, unfortunately, or the winner will be left guessing until he's gray-haired. So let's make it December 15, 1938. To be considered as a contestant, you must mail your entry *before* midnight of that date.

**GOOD LUCK!** We're waiting for you!

1. You don't have to be a scientist with many degrees to know that net weight is the

- (a) weight of liquid products;
- (b) weight of the contents of a container or package;
- (c) weight of anything over a pound;
- (d) weight of a package without its contents.

2. Pennywise housewives always look for the net weight on packaged goods because

- (a) they want to know how much goods they are getting for their money;
- (b) they want their groceryman to know how much they appreciate the pretty package their goods come in;
- (c) they get more that way;
- (d) there isn't any alternative.

3. Those who get . . . . . ounces of sugar get half as much as those who get a pound.

4. Milkmen who give you . . . . . pints of milk give you no more than those who give you a quart.

5. Fluid ounces are used in measuring liquids, and it takes 50, 6, 12, 32, 30 of them to make a liquid quart.

6. Dividing the number of cubic inches in a cake of ice by 30 will give you approximately its correct weight in pounds. When your iceman delivers a cake of ice that is 10 inches long, 10 inches wide, and 12 inches thick, how many pounds of ice do you receive?

7. In Community A, coal sells for \$12 a long ton; in Community B, for the same kind and quality of coal, the



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**4** price is \$11 a short ton. In which place is coal cheaper?

8. Mrs. Jones buys a gill of cream and is told by the store clerk that, as a special favor, he will sell both a gill and a quart at the same rate per ounce. The quart price is 80 cents. How much will her gill cost?

9. Across the street from each other are two filling stations. One sells 5 gallons of gasoline for 88 cents; the other sells 6 gallons for \$1.05. Which is the cheaper price?

10. It's a bad consumer practice to buy dry commodities by the bushel, because

(a) merchants are not careful in measuring bushels;

(b) bushel baskets are made in different sizes, depending on the product to be placed in them;

(c) bushel baskets are measures of cubic content, not weight.

11. Oysters are priced at 50 cents a quart. Suppose Merchant Jones (who does not live in a State where there is a law prescribing the kind of measure to be used in selling oysters) sells them by dry quarts; Merchant Smith by liquid quarts. Do you get more or less by buying from Merchant Jones than by buying from Merchant Smith?

12. Junior, who doesn't care what you call the stuff, will be less annoyed with you if you ask him to consume a peck of spinach than if you expect him to eat a bushel of it, because it takes 2, 3, 4, 8 pecks to make a bushel.

13. Consumers who are lucky enough to afford perfume know that it takes 8, 14, 3, 20, 2 fluid drams of perfume to make a fluid ounce.

14. It's common sense to ask for "a pound of that" or "4 quarts of those" instead of "a dime's worth" or "a box full" because

(a) it is easier for your groceryman to fill your order;

(b) you must obey the law;

(c) you're surer of getting the exact amount you pay for;

(d) it's a wise rule to be careful with your loose change.

15. The surest and quickest way to find out if and when the scales your groceryman uses have been checked by a government official is to

(a) ask the store clerk;

(b) look for a seal on the scales;

(c) write to the Department of Agriculture in Washington;

(d) bring your own set of weights to the store and check the scales;

(e) look at the sales slip.

16. The difference between *mechanical* and *supervisional* activities of Weights and Measures officials is that

(a) mechanical activities cover inspection and certification of scales and measuring devices, while supervisional activities have to do with investigating complaints, observing the weighing and measuring of goods by sellers, informing the public of the office's work, etc.;

(b) mechanical activities deal with repair and alteration of imperfect machines, while supervisional activities deal with supervising of personnel in the office;

(c) mechanical activities deal with all checkups which require intricate equipment, while supervisional work deals with checkups done with master weights and measures.

17. Careful consumers want to be sure that the pointer of a scale is at zero before their goods are weighed, and that it comes to a complete standstill before the goods are removed from the scale, because

(a) it's the only way they have of knowing whether the scale is accurate;

(b) they want to be sure they get all they're paying for;

(c) it's a good way to learn how a scale works;

(d) grocerymen appreciate somebody's checking their reading of the scale.

18. Power to *define* what the standards of weights and measures shall be in this country rests with the

(a) Local Weights and Measures officials;

(b) Congress;

(c) National Bureau of Standards;

(d) Governors of States.

19. By what authority does this agency exercise the power to define standards of weights and measures?

20. Custodian of the *master* weights and measures by which all others in the country are ultimately checked is

(a) Congress;

(b) Director of the Mint;

(c) President;

(d) National Bureau of Standards.

21. There is an international master standard of weight recognized by 30 countries, of which this country is one. Every once in a while, these countries have their national standard weights checked against this international standard to be sure they are identical. This international unit of weight is kept in:

(a) Paris;

(b) London;

(c) Geneva;

(d) Washington;

(e) Greenwich.

22. Many fresh fruit and vegetable containers used in the sale of these products from one State to another are standardized by law, and the Federal agency that administers the law is the

(a) Bureau of Agricultural Economics;

(b) Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce;

(c) Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation;

(d) Food and Drug Administration;

(e) Federal Trade Commission.

23. Remembering dates is dull, but the first national law to standardize the size of any container used for foods was the

(a) Sherman Anti-trust Act;

(b) Standard Container Act;

(c) Food and Drugs Act;

(d) Federal Trade Commission Act;

(e) Apple Barrel Act.

24. Observant consumers notice that packaged foods shipped over State lines have the net contents printed on the label of the package. It's there because

(a) there's a Federal law that makes it illegal not to show net weight;

(b) it's an old established trade practice;

(c) it makes it easier for merchants to invoice their goods accurately;

(d) local Weights and Measures officials require it.

25. Some people think it would be a good idea to standardize by law the size of containers of canned foods, as some of the containers for fresh foods are standardized by law. Which of the following is the strongest consumer argument for such a law?

(a) It would be easier to stock

pantry shelves with cans of the same size than a variety of sizes;

(b) It would make the work of Weights and Measures officials easier;

(c) It would be easier to compare prices;

(d) It would be easier to order foods by telephone.

26. A groceryman sells 2 kinds of canned tomatoes. One kind comes in No. 2 size cans, each of which holds 20 ounces of tomatoes. The other kind comes in No. 303 size cans, each of which holds 17 ounces. Three cans of each size sell for 20 cents. How much more, per pound, will the tomatoes in No. 303 cans cost than the tomatoes in No. 2 cans?

27. A storekeeper, anxious to weigh goods accurately for his customers but finding that no amount of repair will correct an inaccurate scale, should

(a) calculate how much the old scale is in error and make allowance for the error every time something is weighed on it;

(b) explain to customers that the scale is not accurate but that he is charging less per pound for the product than he otherwise would;

(c) replace the inaccurate scale with an accurate one;

(d) Ask his wholesaler to weigh his supplies and mark the weight on each piece or package before delivering to the store.

28. A retail store scale should be placed

(a) wherever it will take up least space;

(b) on a high shelf where it is out of reach of children;

(c) where it is most handy for the clerk to place goods on it;

(d) where the customer can see both the weighing surface and the pointer.

29. When a scale or measuring device is "sealed," it is

(a) insured against all tampering;

(b) marked to show approval by a government official;

(c) placed in safekeeping until needed;

(d) condemned.

30. To check whether you are getting all the gasoline you pay for, the surest way is to

(a) make certain the pump has been approved by a Weights and Measures official, and watch the indicator;

(b) count the times the bell of the pump rings;

(c) check the gas gauge in your car with that of the pump;

(d) always buy from the same merchant.

31. In the course of a year consumers buy 19 billion pounds of potatoes. Potatoes sell, let us say, for 4 cents a pound. Suppose all the scales on which these potatoes were weighed happened to be just slightly inaccurate and every pound consumers bought was shortweight a tiny one-third ounce. In the course of the year, how much would this short weight cost consumers on the whole 19 billion pounds?

32. What is the national standard of weight for a bag of coal?

33. Honest merchants do not object to your checking to make certain you are getting all the coal you pay for. The best check is to

(a) weigh the coal yourself;

(b) ask your merchant if his scales are in working order;

(c) look for an official seal of approval on the delivery truck;

(d) ask for a ticket signed and stamped with a public weighmaster's seal before the coal is unloaded.

34. If you are a careful consumer you do not allow your grocer to "weigh in" the wooden butter dish when he weighs your butter, because

(a) the dish makes the butter lie unevenly on the weighing surface of the scale;

(b) the dish might hide part of the butter so that you would not know exactly how much you were getting;

(c) you don't want to pay butter prices for wooden dishes;

(d) the dish is harmful to the butter.

35. The major reason why, in some cities, Weights and Measures laws require that bread be sold only in loaves of certain weights is that such standardization

(a) simplifies the work of Weights and Measures officials;

(b) makes for fairer competition between sellers of bread;

(c) discourages bakers from making bread with too many air bubbles;

(d) was demanded by manufacturers of baking pans.

36. "There is a mandatory system of uniform weights and measures in force throughout this country." Is this statement TRUE or FALSE?

37. A model State weights and measures law has been adopted by the

(a) National Conference on Weights and Measures;

(b) Federal Trade Commission;

(c) National Better Business Bureau;

(d) National Bureau of Standards.

38. Every housewife should have a set of accurate kitchen scales, because

(a) she should keep a record of the food she lends her neighbors;

(b) it is the only way to teach children arithmetic;

(c) She can thus justify her weekly food budget to her husband;

(d) it is common sense and sound economy to check the weight of foods she buys.

39. If you send your wash to a laundry to be done by the pound, you should weigh it, because

(a) that is the only check you have on the weight you are charged;

(b) Weights and Measures officials never check laundry scales;

(c) hotels and restaurants always do this.

40. If a householder wants an official check on the accuracy of his electric meter, he should

(a) write to his Congressman;

(b) Write to the Edison Electric Institute;

(c) request an inspection by a field officer of the National Bureau of Standards;

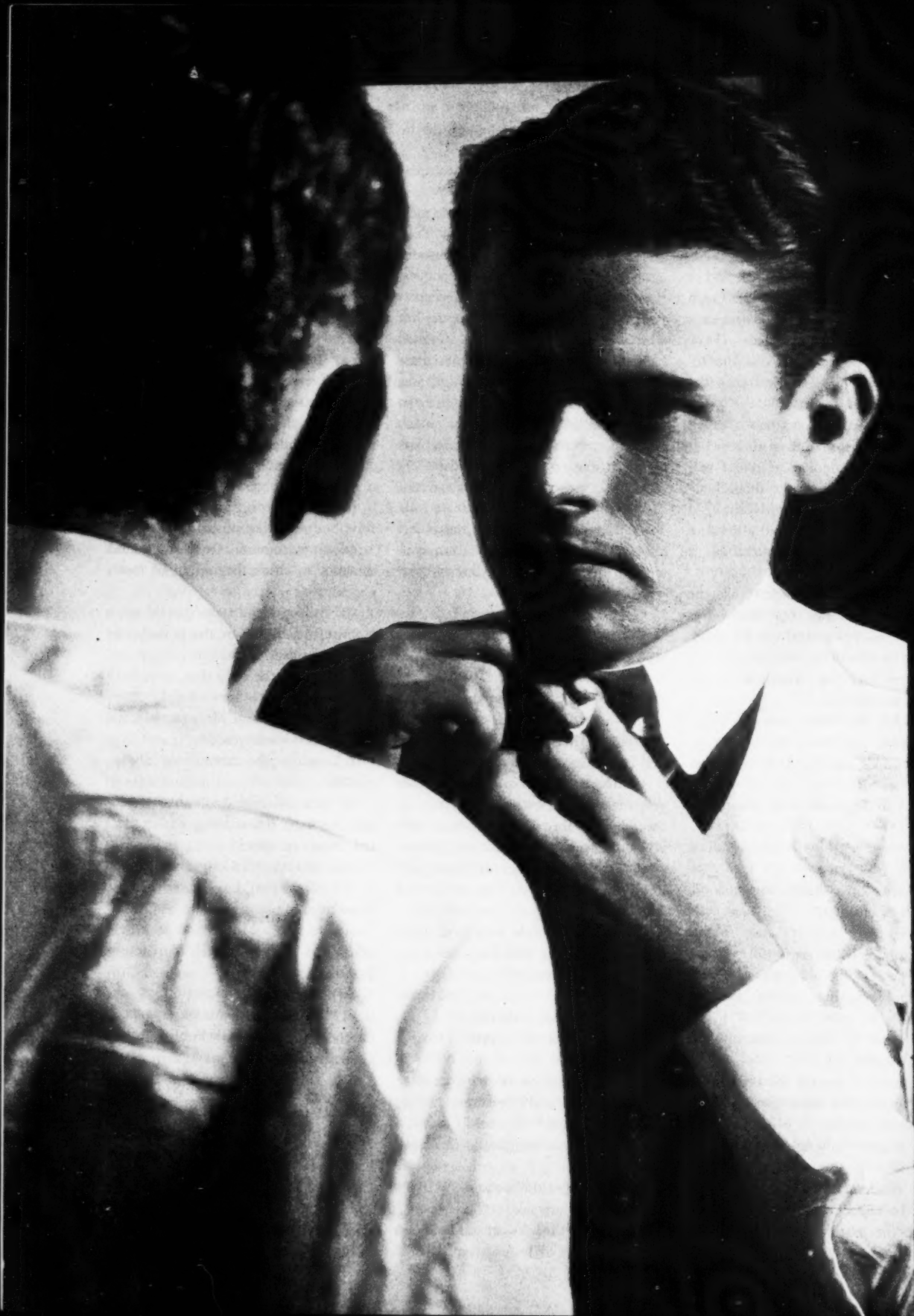
(d) request an inspection by the local Weights and Measures official or the State or local Public Service Commission.

COMPLETE IN 20 WORDS OR LESS

"Consumers gain from honest and adequate weights and measures enforcement because . . . . ."

COMPLETE IN 20 WORDS OR LESS

"Merchants gain from honest and adequate weights and measures enforcement because . . . . ."



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*If industry puts these rules to work, the days of consumer irritation over cotton goods that come from the tub several sizes smaller should be numbered. But consumers will have to help*

**IF YOU SEE** a torn shirt flying from a flag pole these days, it may be there because some consumer is celebrating his emancipation from collars that shrink till they choke.

As the result of the promulgation of Trade Practice Rules by the Federal Trade Commission covering the woven cotton yard goods industry, labels on cotton goods making claims about shrinkage must, from now on, specify exactly what they mean when they say "shrunk" or "preshrunk." Under the rules these words may be applied only to cotton goods that have actually undergone a shrinking process. In addition, the label must guarantee that the cotton goods will not shrink more than a stated percent.

Shrinkage statements in the labels of cotton goods from now on will read something like this: "Preshrunk—will not shrink more than — percent under Commercial Standard CS 59-36."

June 30, 1938 is the date these rules officially bear, but they began to take shape years ago—perhaps with the first complaint registered over shrinkage by a very angry consumer. Locating that protest on the calendar would be difficult. For the purpose here, 1932 is a good date to begin with.

At that time dissatisfaction with labels about shrinkage reached the point on the flood register where the alarm began to ring. Examining the state of the trade and of consumer choler, the New York Board of Trade put its Textile Subsection to work on a solution of the shrinkage problem. This committee after nosing around the problem, decided that they weren't representative enough to deal with it.

So they fostered the establishment of an autonomous organization called the Textile Shrinkage Conference. Convening in February of 1933, this conference after many months came up with suggested rules on shrinkage. These rules the Conference referred to the American Standards Association, an organization made up largely of engineers and commercial and industrial representatives. The ASA undertakes to persuade industries voluntarily to adopt standard practices in industry and thus eliminate waste and foster efficiency.

● **CANVASSING** approximately 50 groups—including interested consumers, manufacturers, processors, distributors, and the Federal Trade Commission—the ASA sought approval for the proposed shrinkage rules. It succeeded in getting the okay of all but one group—the National Association of Finishers. This organization objected because its members do the shrinking job and whatever guarantees are made would have to be made by them. Stuck right in the middle of the problem, too, this Association could see many technical disadvantages that outweighed the positive advantages claimed for the projected rules.

Among the hearty endorsements given the plan, however, were some from the American Home Economics Association, the American Association of University Women, the Laundry-owners National Association, the National Retail Dry Goods Association, and the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers. Consumers wanted it;

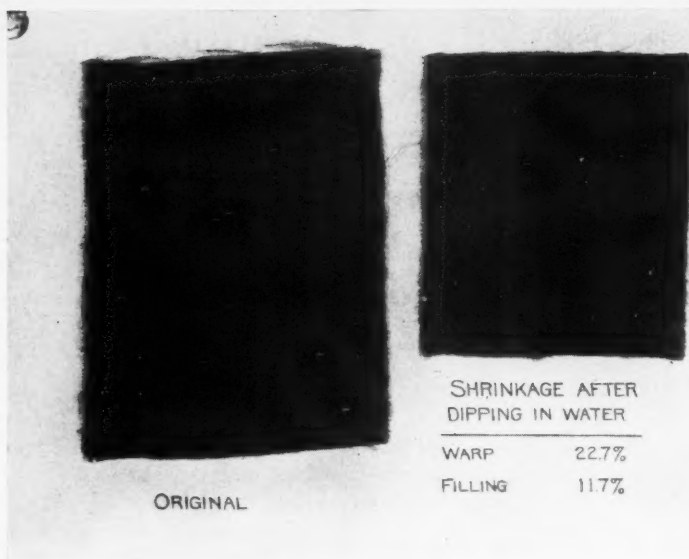
the retailers wanted it. But since the Finishers objected, the American Standards Association, which acts only when unanimous approval is forthcoming, could not act at all.

Balked here, the Textile Shrinkage Conference then passed the problem to the Federal Trade Commission. Taking time out to make its own survey of the problem the Federal Trade Commission went to work on it through its Fair Trade Practice Division. Early in 1937 this Division issued for the purposes of discussion tentative rules regarding shrinkage, and called a Trade Practice Conference for March of 1937. At this conference and a second one on January 27, 1938, in Washington, everyone interested in the shrinkage problem had a chance to speak his mind. Consumers spoke up. Laundrymen read their views; spokesmen for retailers said their piece. Finishers had a chance to object, the cotton manufacturers to approve. Finally, with everyone's opinion on the record, the Federal Trade Commission turned its experts loose on the data collected. On June 30, 1938, the FTC issued its final rules.

Concerned lest the rules as phrased would apply only to cotton piece goods and not to ready-to-wear cotton goods,







**IT'S JUST AS WELL** that this cloth was not made up into a dress! Under Federal Trade Commission shrinkage rules, consumers can now get label guarantees against shrinkage like this.

the New York City Federation of Women's Clubs wrote to the Federal Trade Commission. In reply, the Commission reassured consumers and stated that the rules as issued applied not only to piece goods, but to all cotton goods, "regardless of whether the same may be in the form of piece goods or a garment when sold in the channels of trade or to the consuming public."

●**MANY HISTORICAL EVENTS**, studious consumers know, represent a compromise between conflicting tendencies, interests, and demands. The shrinkage rules began as a plan to govern all fabrics, in every stage of their development toward finished goods. In the course of the development of these rules, however, everything except cotton was thrown out. At another stage everything except cotton piece goods was thrown out. At a still later stage, the Federal Trade Commission went out and brought finished cotton garments back under the rules. To see how all the various economic groups interested in the shrinkage problem came together and hammered away on their problem until the present rules came out, let us eavesdrop on the second hearing held by the Federal Trade Commission.

Gathering in the old gingerbread apartment house which served as the Federal Trade Commission's headquarters before it moved to its stone-columned modern building on Constitution Avenue, the meeting was called to order by the FTC's Assistant Director of Trade Practices. Usually there is comparative calm after the gavel has hammered out quiet. At this meeting the quiet lasted until the Chairman had spoken and a representative of the Textile Shrinkage Conference had given a brief report. But then, formalities over, a representative of the finishers walked down the aisle to the big conference table and objected.

"The varying and uncontrollable conditions which the finishers contend with in this process make it impossible to make statements of a definite nature as applied to particular pieces of cloth." With 500 different mills, 500,000 looms, 20 million spindles, all producing threads, and cloth of different strength and shrinkage potentialities, how can we, he asked in effect, make any guarantees about shrinkage?

"Gentlemen it's hokum," commented a consumer editor of a nationally known magazine. Speaking not as an expert, but simply as someone who had talked with consumers

and written to them, as someone who knew what they wanted, the consumer editor went on, "Government specifications for shrinkage allow only one percent in the warp and one percent in the filling. What is good enough for the prisons and reform schools is not any too good for consumers. If you want to play this game fair, settle on one meaning for the term shrunk or preshrunk."

"We do want to play fair with consumers," another spokesman for the finishers said. "We raise questions because we have to produce the goods. But we approach the problem, I will not say slowly because we have been working at it 5 years or more, but we approach it in a broad and commonsense way, taking a step at a time, not by imposing rules which we cannot meet—rules," he continued, "which may require us to drop entirely the question of trying to furnish shrunk goods."

"I am trying to make up my mind," a department store spokesman interjected, "whether this industry is boasting or apologizing for taking 5 years to arrive at a determination of this matter. Department stores," he emphasized, "have entered upon a campaign to compel producers of merchandise to furnish retailers with such information which may, and should, be passed on to consumers."

●**AN AMERICAN** Home Economics Association representative arose to prove just how important action on shrinkage was. A home economist who was also a textile expert had gone into the matter of shrinkage. Twenty-one different brands of sheets had been purchased, and then had been washed 50 times, each one by exactly the same method. None of the sheets when purchased had been labeled preshrunk but some had been sold as shrink proof. Measurements showed that shrinkage varied from 1.2 percent to 29 percent. Guarantees about shrinkage had nothing to do with the amount of shrinkage.

Another test on shirts was described. Fourteen shirts had been sent to the laundry 20 times and then measured. Many of them had been labeled pre-



shrank, but they shrank just the same—some as much as 5 percent. Cotton dresses and cotton yard goods showed up the same way.

"Is there anyone else present who wishes to present his views," the chairman of the meeting asked. No one replied. "The meeting is adjourned." And then on June 30, 1938 the rules came out.

Applicable to all woven cotton goods, finished or not, the rules do

two things, first they forbid certain practices held to be unfair and therefore illegal. Second, they require manufacturers and distributors to do certain things.

Forbidden is the practice of misleading or deceiving consumers by any manner regarding the amount cotton goods will shrink. In the language of the Federal Trade Commission "the practice of selling, offering for sale, advertising, describing, branding,

marking or labeling, woven cotton yard goods in a manner which is calculated to mislead or deceive . . . with respect to the preshrunk character of such goods . . . the residual shrinkage . . . or respecting any other shrinkage properties . . . is an unfair trade practice."

Banned, too, is the use of "full shrink," "shrinkproof," "nonshrinkable," and similar terms if the goods sold, advertised, or labeled contain any further capacity to shrink at all. For practical purposes, since all cotton goods shrink some, these words are put on the disallowed list altogether.

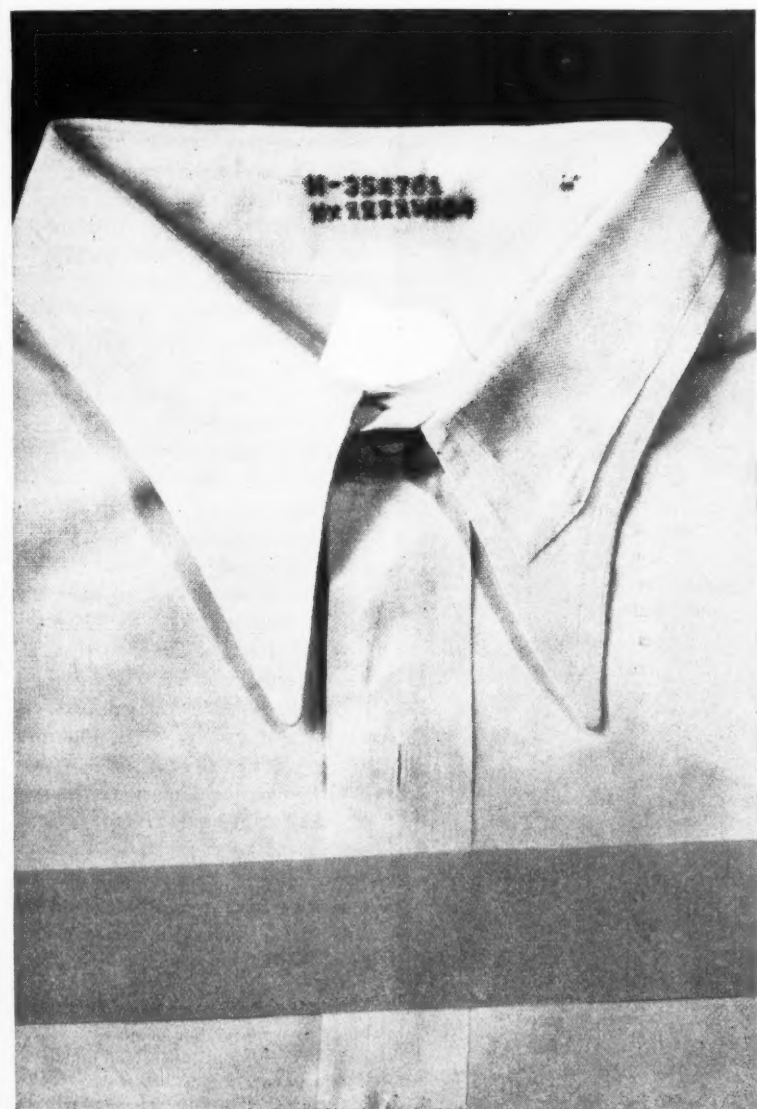
●SHRUNK and preshrunk may be used to describe cotton goods, if, when they are used, a statement guaranteeing maximum shrinkage accompanies them. Thus, a manufacturer may label a garment: "These goods have been shrunk (or preshrunk) to the extent that residual shrinkage will not exceed . . . % when tested in accordance with the recognized and approved standards or tests." Or the label may read something like this: "Preshrunk—residual shrinkage 1%," or 2%. Residual shrinkage used here means simply that the product will shrink some more, even though it has been subjected to a shrinkage process, but that such shrinkage will not exceed 1 or 2 percent, as indicated.

To make sure that everyone uses a reliable and adequate test to determine how much a piece of goods will shrink or how much potential or residual shrinkage it may contain, the Commission specifies that these facts be determined by a recognized standard test—in this case a test devised by the American Standards Association known as "Commercial Standard CS59-36." A weak or inefficient test obviously would show unreliable and misleading results.

Two points must be made about the new rules. First, a manufacturer need not sell his goods as "Preshrunk" or "Shrunk" at all, and then he does not have to pay attention to the rules. Consumers who want to be protected from the hazards of shrinkage, therefore, must insist that the goods they buy

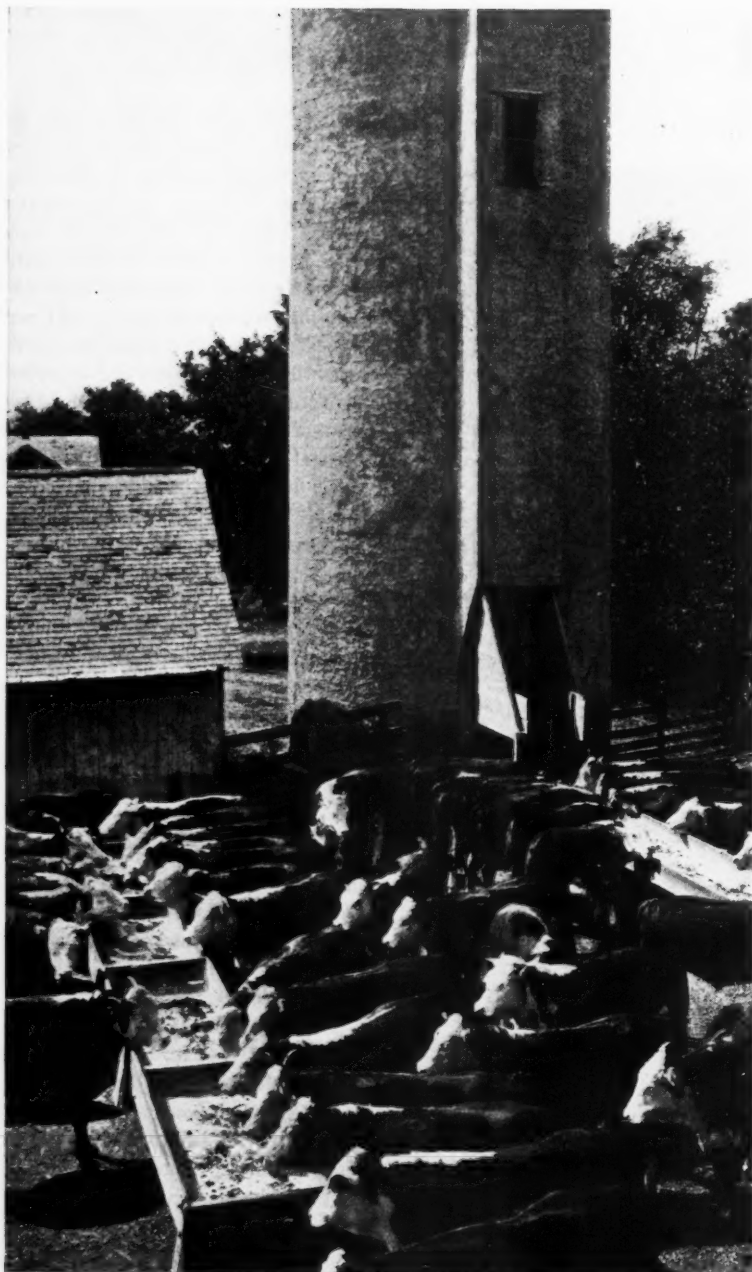
[Concluded on page 18]

ONE of the minor, but common, annoyances of the launderer's and the wearer's lives is this kind of uneven shrinkage, where the lining of collars contracts more than the surface material. Under Federal Trade Commission shrinkage rules, if a label states the garment will shrink only 2 percent, this statement must be true of all materials in the garment.



# Feed Buyers Are Lucky

*They seldom have to guess on the quality in the package when they go to market*



CONSUMERS' GUIDE

**WHEN** the little pig goes to market to buy a mixed feed for himself he does not buy a pig in a poke. Nor does his owner, the farmer, when he buys mixed feed for his other stock. In 46 of the 48 States today there are feed laws. Because of these feed laws, there is hardly a bag or package of commercial mixed feed sold which does not give feed purchasers the information they need to know at the time they make their purchases.

North Dakota which has a typical feed law, for example, requires this information upon each package of commercial mixed feeds:

1. Name of each ingredient used;
2. Guaranteed minimum amount of crude protein;
3. Guaranteed minimum amount of crude fat;
4. Guaranteed maximum amount of crude fiber;
5. Net weight;
6. Name, brand, or trademark of the feed;
7. Name and address of the manufacturer;
8. Maximum amount of peat, humus, or moss;
9. Exact amount of foreign mineral matters and unwholesome feeding materials.

Consumers dashing off to the store to get a box of breakfast food, or stopping in the drugstore on the way home for a tube of toothpaste, might run over such label requirements, and say, "So what! I don't care how much pro-

**FEED** is a cooperative first. Of all commodities made or purchased by cooperatives in the United States, feed ranks first. Approximately 5 cents out of every dollar of farm income in 1936 was spent on feed.

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tein there is in my toothpaste, and as for the amount of moss in my breakfast food, why words fail me."

Significantly, however, the descriptive information required for mixed feeds is precisely the information farmers need when they purchase feedstuffs. With it they can buy economically the diet elements they want.

●FARMERS buy mixed feed for the nutrients they contain, their proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and mineral salts. In dairy farming, for example, these food elements are fed to cows to increase and enrich their milk production. So when the farmer goes shopping he wants to know how much protein, how much fat, and how much carbohydrate, he is getting in the feed he is buying. The label information tells him the percentage of the important nutrients the feed he is buying contains.

These nutrients, however, cannot be given to animals in their pure form. Thus fiber is necessary in some feeds and is not an adulterant, despite the fact that feeds high in fiber content are less digestible than other feeds. For the farmer's purposes, an excessive fiber content reduces feed efficiency. Other nutrients are added to feeds to meet dietary deficiencies. But the percentage of the important nutrients in the feed is listed on the label. Feed purchasers at least have some idea what they are paying for.

As a further guarantee to farmers, feeds may not by law contain substances dangerous to the health of domestic animals. Together, the positive requirement that the labels list the ingredients in a feed with the percentage of principal nutrients, plus the en-

joinder against the use of dangerous substances in feedstuffs, give the buyers of feedstuffs a pocketbook insurance far exceeding any that buyers of foodstuffs get.

Nor is it that farmers are more concerned about their cattle than their families. It is simply that farmers, like other consumers, are less acutely aware of themselves as consumers than as producers. Despite the resemblance between the feed laws and the Food and Drug laws, feed laws are designed to protect farmers as producers, rather than farmers as consumers. These laws first appeared in the latter part of the 19th Century together with a number of other laws which also look like, but are not, consumer legislation.

With the completion of the transcontinental railroads, with the improvement of transportation between country and town, and with the rise of commercial farming, farm homesteads which had been self-sufficient were gradually knitted into the national economy. Farmers began to sell their products to city dealers—milk and grain, for example—and to buy products that they needed in their farming from the city.

●MIXED feeds, which farmers began to buy, were often sold with the assurance that they contained protein and fat, but instead they frequently contained shredded straw, sawdust, ground corncob, and almost any other adulterant. As producers, then, to protect their business, farmers combined to get laws on the statute books that reduced their bargaining disadvantages with the sellers of adulterated feed products. In the States, statute books began to fill up with feed laws, ferti-

lizer laws, weights and measures laws, and other legal protections against practices which cut farmers' economic legs from under them.

Like all new laws, the feed laws met with opposition when they first were passed. It was not long, however, before most everyone was shouting their praises. In Vermont, for example, in 1923 the agency charged with the enforcement of the law found itself hampered by a lack of funds. At this moment the feed manufacturers, who were to be regulated and inspected, approached the agency with a plan to provide adequate funds for inspection. Then the regulating agency, and the business to be regulated, together appealed to the State legislature to enact the new tax plan into law.

●WHEN feed manufacturers today meet in their annual convention they are addressed by a representative of the Association of Feed Control Officials. And when the feed control officials meet in their annual convention they are addressed by a representative of the feed manufacturers. The 2 associations work together, advise each other, consult with each other, to the end that the industry and the farmers they both serve may benefit.

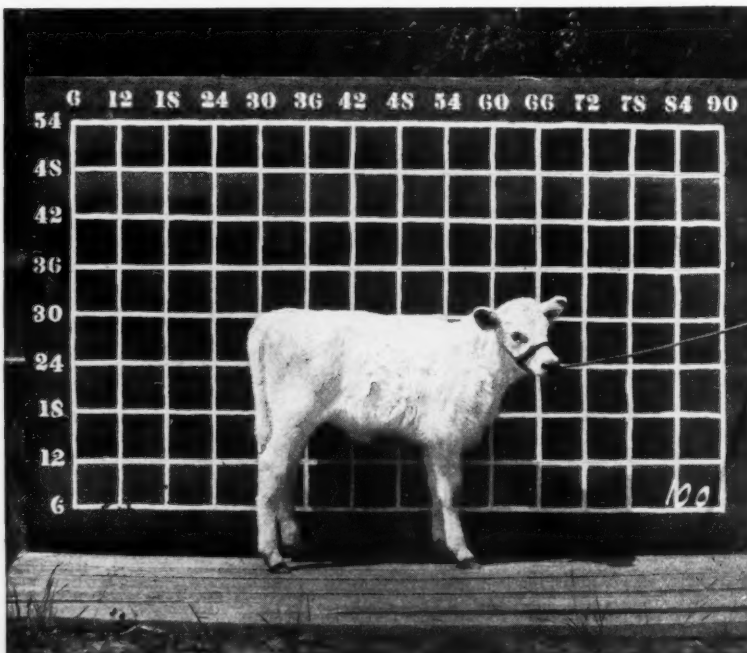
Nor does cooperation stop there.



- 12** The 46 States which have enacted Feed Control laws have enacted different laws, with varying requirements in many cases. Some do not measure up to desirable standards in the minds of the feed control officials. The multiplicity of laws harasses manufacturers in that they must prepare their prod-



**FARMERS** buy feeds for the nutrients—carbohydrates, fats, proteins, and mineral salts—they contain. Labels on animal feeds tell farmers the quality of the product they are buying.



**LAWS** in 46 States are emphatic in requiring that the labels on feed for livestock list the ingredients of the feed. Few laws defining requirements for labels on human foods are as meticulous.

ucts and their labels to conform with many standards. Both the feed manufacturers and the feed control officials therefore believe that there should be a uniform law in all States. Drafted by the Association of Feed Control Officials this uniform law has the support of the manufacturers.

Even the best intentioned laws get snagged on enforcement problems or are left high and dry by a failure of funds. Feed laws, however, do not fall into that group of laws lost and forgotten in the statute books. Nor do feed control officials belong to that futile class of law enforcement officials who must blind themselves to evasions because there is no money for administration.

Because the feed laws require the descriptive labeling of feeds, and because the Federal Food and Drug law forbids the misbranding of foods for humans and animals in interstate commerce, local enforcement is strengthened by the Food and Drug Administration.

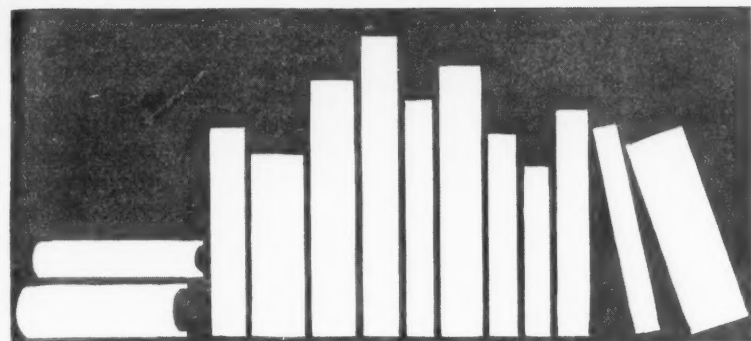
●**MANUFACTURERS** to sell their feeds in most States must list their ingredients on the packages. The moment a manufacturer makes a false statement on a label, if his product is in interstate commerce, he runs afoul, not only of the State law there but also the Federal law. Without duplication State and Federal laws gear together so efficiently that there is no legal no-man's land into which neither State nor Federal officials may go.

Inside the States the Feed Control agencies maintain testing laboratories in which samples of feeds sold in the State during the year are analyzed. Here the actual contents of the feeds are checked against their claimed content. Too, the percentage of each important nutrient and also of fiber or filler is verified. The results of these analyses are published each year in annual reports, and farmers, wanting more information about the feedstuffs they buy, may obtain these analyses, keep them, and take them along when they go buying.

To finance feed law enforcement, all except one of the 46 States that have feed laws require manufacturers

[Concluded on page 18]





## CONSUMERS' BOOKSHELF

A COURSE IN CONSUMER EDUCATION, by Norma C. Allertz and Lucius W. Dye, with Fred T. Wilhelms, collaborator. Social Science XLI-x. 1938, pp. 329, mimeo. Address: Teachers College and University Extension Division, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr. \$1.00. Reduced prices in lots of 5 copies or more. This set of materials is a correspondence course distributed by the Extension Division of the University of Nebraska for use within the State. Persons outside of the State may purchase the materials even though they may not use them on a correspondence study basis. The manual includes a set of directions to the supervisor, a set of materials for the pupil, a set of tests, and a key to the tests. Some of the topics considered are general buying practices, advertising, home medical care, the automobile, textiles, and consumers cooperation.

REPORT ON ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE SOUTH, prepared for the President of the United States by the National Emergency Council. 1938, pp. 64. Address: United States Information Service, 1405 G Street, NW, Washington, D. C. Free. This report covers the following topics: economic resources, soil, water, population, private and public income, women and children, ownership and use of the land, credit, use of natural resources, industry, and purchasing power.

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CONSUMER EDUCA-

TION, compiled under the direction of Ira W. Kibby, chief of Bureau of Business Education. 1938, pp. 426, mimeo. Address: California State Department of Education, Sacramento, Calif. \$1.00. (Residents of California add 3¢ sales tax.) Contains over 5,000 references on buying goods and services, and other consumer problems such as labeling, standardization, standards of living, advertising, cooperation, consumer credit, and methods of developing instructional material for consumer education.

A TENTATIVE COURSE OF STUDY IN CONSUMER EDUCATION (Social Business Education—Business Principles II), prepared by the Curriculum Committee for Secondary Schools. 1936, pp. 75, mimeo. Address: Louisville Public Schools, Louisville, Ky. 70¢. Sections of this publication are devoted to: (1) The Consumer—His Plight and Need for Education, (2) Advertising, (3) Frauds, (4) Techniques of Buying Clothing, Foods, Housing, Household Equipment, Recreation and Services.

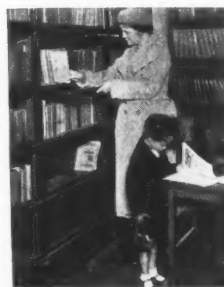
BUYING OF DRUGS, by Winona M. McGuire, Fresno Technical High School, and A. Prudence McGuire, San Bernardino High School. 1937, pp. 52, mimeo. Address: California State Department of Education, Sacramento, Calif. 15¢. (Residents of California add 1¢ sales tax.) Subjects treated: buying of "patent" medicines, dentifrices, cold

cures, antiseptics, pain killers, cathartics and laxatives, and materials for the family medicine chest. Contains a glossary. Each unit is made up of written discussion of significant points for the student, a list of questions to be considered, suggested student activities, a true-false test, and a bibliography.

HOW TO BUY, Series 3, by students of home economics class, University of Iowa. 1937, pp. 58, mimeo. Address: Department of Home Economics, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. 25¢. Presents in brief outline form quality guides for buying carpets and rugs, gas ranges, men's dress shirts, men's leather gloves, perfumes, reading and study lamps, typewriter paper, wooden tables, wrist watches, and writing paper. Bibliographies.

KNOW YOUR COAL. (A 2-reel movie.) Address: Consumers' Counsel, National Bituminous Coal Commission, Box 483, Washington, D. C. Available to schools, clubs, and other interested groups which will pay transportation charges both ways. This movie is a 2-reel sound film available in both 16- and 35-millimeter sizes, showing the various types of analyses which can be made of bituminous coal and some of the reasons for making them. May be shown without sound.

KNOW YOUR COAL. (A pamphlet.) Prepared by the Consumers' Counsel of the National Bituminous Coal Commission. Consumer Ideas No. 3. 1938, pp. 11, illus. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 10¢. Describes the proposal submitted by the Consum-



ers' Counsel to the National Bituminous Coal Commission for a simple method of classifying coal uniformly throughout the United States. Such a classification would rate coals on the basis of (a) ability to resist breakage, (b) ash, (c) B. t. u. or heat content, (d) volatility or smokiness, (e) moisture, (f) sulphur, and (g) ash softening temperature or clinkering tendency.

**BUYING ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.** Extension Circular 27. 1937, set of 12 cards. Address: Extension Service, State College of Washington, Pullman, Wash. Free. This circular is made up of a set of 12 cards measuring 4x6 inches which may be conveniently inserted in your shopping bag. The first two give brief comment on (a) standards to follow when buying electrical equipment, and (b) 5-year plan for buying farm and home electrical equipment for a medium-sized family. The remaining 10 cards give brief summaries of (a) buying points to observe, (b) questions to ask the salesman, and (c) care and use of the following types of equipment: irons, toasters, washing machines, waffle irons, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, ironers, mixers and beaters, household ranges, care and use of a range.

**ONE HUNDRED PROBLEMS IN CONSUMER CREDIT,** by Charles H. Mengendahl and Le Baron R. Foster. Pollak Pamphlet No. 35. 1938, pp. 55. Address: Pollak Foundation for Economic Research, Newton, Mass. 10¢. Reduced prices on lots of 20 or more. Contains problems in consumer finance for use in junior and senior high schools and college classes in the mathematics of finance. Bibliography.

**YOUR PRESSURE COOKER—HOW TO CHOOSE IT—HOW TO USE IT FOR CANNING,** by Arnold E. Baragar, Department of Home Economics. Circular 57. 1938, pp. 14, illus. Address: Experiment Station, College of Agriculture, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr. Free. Evaluates the following factors to

consider in the selection of a pressure cooker: Size and shape, Kind of material, Sealing and clamping devices, Pressure gauges, Safety valves, Thermometers. Describes the proper methods of using a pressure cooker in canning.

**BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHFUL HOUSING,** preliminary report of the Committee on the Hygiene of Housing, of the American Public Health Association. A reprint from the American Journal of Public Health, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, March, 1938, pp. 352-372. Address: American Public Health Association, 50 West 50th Street, New York, N. Y. 25¢. The basic principles of healthful housing are presented under the following general headings: (a) Fundamental physiological needs, (b) Fundamental psychological needs, (c) Protection against contagion, and (d) Protection against accidents.

**RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ON THE MARCH,** by the Rural Electrification Administration. 1938, pp. 273. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 20¢. Gives information on rural electrification progress, how power goes to the farms, pioneering in the rural electrification law, and the effect on the cost of electricity.

**REFRIGERATED FOOD LOCKERS—A NEW COOPERATIVE SERVICE,** by L. B. Mann, Farm Credit Administration. Circular C-107. 1938, pp. 30, illus. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 10¢. Discusses the spread of the refrigerated-locker plan, means of organizing and financing, plant layout, equipment and operating costs, inspection requirements, and possible savings to patrons. Also gives some general suggestions for operation, a simple agreement with patrons, and a list of selected references.

**PROPOSED MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF THREE TYPES OF UPHOLSTERY FABRICS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF**

**SIXTY-TWO MATERIALS,** by Bess V. Morrison and Margaret B. Hayes, Textile and Clothing Division, Bureau of Home Economics. Circular 483. 1938, pp. 28, illus. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 5¢. Report of a research study giving breaking strength, weight per square yard, number of yards per inch and fabric balance, resistance to abrasion, and colorfastness to light for the 62 fabrics studied. Sets up minimum requirements for two grades of each of the following classes of fabrics: (a) friezes, (b) rib weaves, and (c) damasks.

**FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION: RULES OF PRACTICE, STATEMENT OF POLICY AND ACTS OF CONGRESS FROM WHICH THE COMMISSION DERIVES ITS POWERS.** 1938, pp. 94. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 15¢.

**COOPERATIVE PURCHASING OF FARM SUPPLIES IN MISSISSIPPI,** by John H. Lister and Gerald M. Francis, Cooperative Division, Farm Credit Administration. Bulletin 22. 1938, pp. 59, illus. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 10¢. After a brief discussion of agricultural conditions in Mississippi this pamphlet discusses the organization structure, sources of capital, membership relations, management facilities, operating methods and problems, volume of business, and financial problems of the Mississippi Federated Cooperatives and its county member associations.

**WOOL AND PART-WOOL FABRICS (not including Blankets and Knit Underwear),** by National Bureau of Standards. Commercial Standard CS65-38. 1938, pp. 17. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 5¢. Provides standard methods and requirements for description and labeling of wool and part-wool fabrics as agreed on by the industry. Relates history of the project, and contains list of individuals and organizations who have accepted the code.

Bess V. Hayes, on, Bu- Circular Address: ments, report of breaking re yard, d fabric on, and 62 fab- num re- of each fabrics: ves, and

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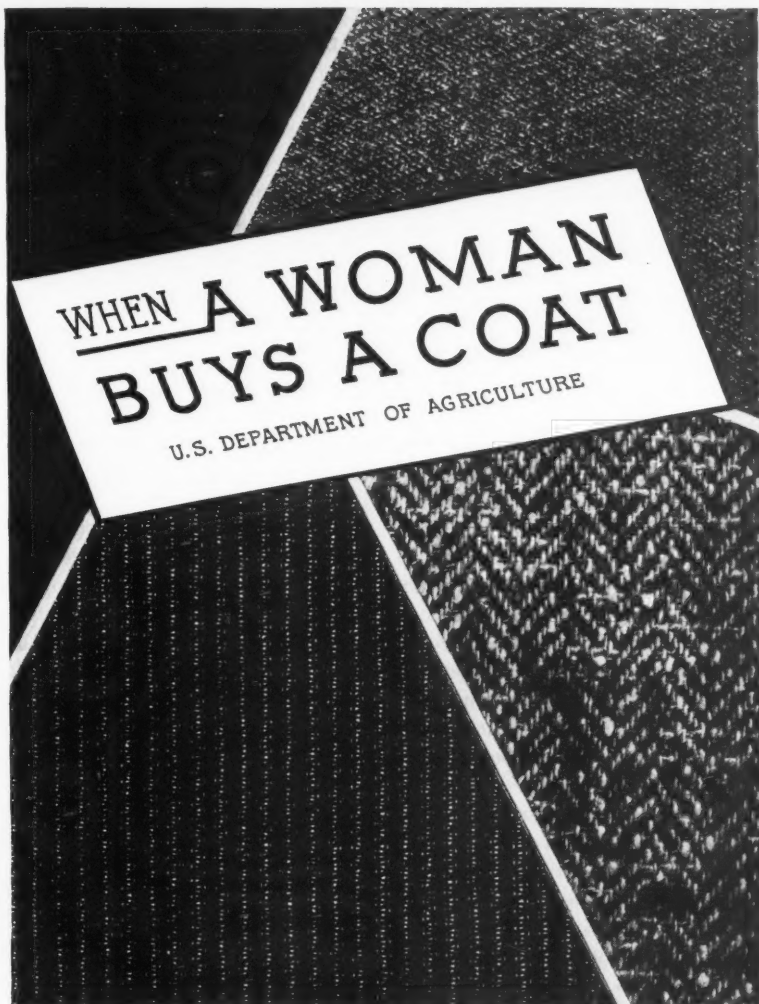
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**EFFICIENT LAUNDRY METHODS**, by Esther Pond. Extension Bulletin 243. 1938, pp. 15, illus. Address: Extension Service, State College of Washington, Pullman, Wash. Free. Designed to show the housewife the desirability of adopting efficient methods of laundering, and with special emphasis on ways of avoiding fatigue, eliminating unnecessary walking and scrubbing. Contains diagrams illustrating the efficient arrangement of laundry equipment.

**EDUCATION FOR WISE CONSUMPTION.** The Journal of Educational Sociology, Vol. II, No. 7, March, 1938, pp. 385-448. Single copies of this magazine may be secured from the Journal of Educational Sociology, Inc., 26 Washington Place, New York, N. Y., 35¢. The entire March issue of this magazine is given over to a discussion of education for wise consumption. The following articles are included:

1. Why Consumer Education?, by Henry Harap.
2. Consumer Education Throughout the Curriculum, by James E. Mendenhall and C. Maurice Wieting.
3. Consumer Education in Rural Areas, by W. A. Ross.
4. Consumer Cooperation in America, by E. R. Bowen.
5. Recent Studies of Sociology in the Public High Schools of Michigan, by Leonard C. Kercher.
6. Bibliographic Materials, by I. David Satlow.

**MENUS AND RECIPES FOR LUNCHES AT SCHOOL**, by Rowena S. Carpenter, Helen N. Hann, and Fanny W. Yeatman, U. S. Bureau of Home Economics. Miscellaneous Publication No. 246. 1936, pp. 25, illus. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 10¢. Discusses the need of variety, and balanced diet in the school lunch. Stresses the importance of supervised group lunches giving menus and recipes for the feeding of 50 children together with practical purchasing suggestions. Special plans for nursery schools are included.



**WINTER COATS** represent large investments! Here's an attractive booklet, filled with pictures, to help you make them wise investments. The Bureau of Home Economics prepared it to tell you what you should know before you buy: Facts about fabrics, construction, color, labels. You can get copies for 10 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

**CONSUMER EDUCATION SERVICE**, prepared by Mrs. Harriet Howe. Address: American Home Economics Association, 620 Mills Bldg., Washington, D. C. Subscription, \$1.00 per year. This service consists of two types of mimeographed releases, a news letter and a miscellany, generally issued at monthly or bi-monthly intervals. Included are new publications, reports of progress in standardization and grade labeling, governmental news of in-

terest to consumers, legislation, trade promotion campaigns, developments in the cooperative movement, and other consumer news.

**LIST OF PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO HOUSEHOLD PURCHASERS**, compiled by the Division of Codes and Specifications. Letter Circular LC-416. 1937, pp. 20, mimeo. Address: National Bureau of Standards, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C. Free.

# 16 YOUR FOOD SUPPLIES AND COSTS

## HIGHLIGHTS

**More turkey, but less cranberries, than last year are in prospect.**

**Relatively large supplies of cabbage expected.**

**Egg prices generally are highest in November.**

**Grapefruit supplies expected to be largest on record.**

**Bread price reductions carry U. S. average price to lowest point since early 1937.**

**ALL FOODS** Retail costs went up only four-tenths of one percent from August to September. But back of this small change there was a sharp seasonal rise in egg prices, which together with slightly higher milk and fresh pork prices, more than offset the effect of a marked reduction in bread prices and minor declines in other items. Despite this increase, food costs are only a little above their 1938 low point (February and August) and are the lowest for September since 1934.

Compared with last September, food costs in general are down about 8 percent. Eggs are the only food group priced higher than in 1937, but the increase amounts to only 4 percent. Sharpest decreases from a year ago are in meats, fats and oils, and dried fruits and beans, where the decreases range from 12 to 18 percent. In other items the decline is close to average. Recent changes have carried the cost of cereals and bakery products to their lowest level since the spring of 1934 and canned fruits and vegetables to their lowest point since the end of 1933. Eggs, however, are the highest for September since 1930.

Food costs are much closer to the lowest level for September (1932) than they are to the high September (1929). In mid-September of this year, the index of retail food costs, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics was 78.7 percent of the average for 1923-25. In September 1932, the

index was 66.7 percent, and in September 1929 it reached 108 percent.

Supplies of most foods during the remainder of 1938 probably will continue larger than a year earlier, and costs in general are expected to remain under their 1937 level. Sharpest increases in supply over last year are in prospect for poultry, meats, dairy products, and cabbage, and most marked decreases in apples and eggs. Yearly peak in food costs generally comes in November and costs then go down through February. This year it looks like the peak was reached earlier than usual, in the summer, and that part of the decline has already occurred.

**EGGS** Supplies are expected to continue smaller than a year earlier during the remainder of 1938, but in 1939 supplies probably will be bigger than in the current year. Relatively small stocks of storage eggs, coupled with smaller fresh egg production than in 1937 have been the major factors behind the larger than usual price upswing this year. Storage stocks are an important source of supply during the last quarter of the year when fresh egg production reaches its lowest level. Current storage stocks are almost a third under a year ago.

Continuation of the present rate of increase in prices would result in peak egg prices in November considerably above their 1937 level and might result in the highest prices since 1930. There is some possibility, however,

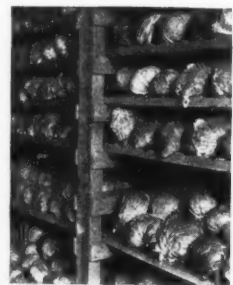
that fresh egg production may comprise a larger than usual proportion of total supplies during the last two months of the year because of the large hatching this spring. This condition would offset part of the price boosting effect of small storage stocks. Retail egg prices went up 5 cents a dozen from August to September and were a cent a dozen higher than last September.

## CEREALS AND BAKERY PRODUCTS

Price reductions in 21 of the 51 cities reporting to the Bureau of Labor Statistics carried the U. S. average price of white bread down a quarter of a cent to 8.4 cents a pound on September 13. This is the lowest U. S. average price since the 11-month period—April, 1936, through February, 1937—when the average price was at its present level. Compared with a year ago, bread is about half a cent a pound cheaper. Sharpest price decreases occurred in the Northeastern cities, for only small decreases were reported in the West and in the South. It is highly probable that further price reductions may occur since the margin between the U. S. average retail price and the computed replacement cost of the ingredients in a typical pound loaf is still relatively high.

Flour prices also declined further from August through September, reaching their lowest level since the spring of 1933. Bread prices, however, are about a cent and a half a pound above their level of the spring of 1933.

**DAIRY PRODUCTS** Prices have failed to move up, as they usually do





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during the last half of the year, primarily because of relatively large supplies. During the remainder of the year supplies of milk, butter and other manufactured dairy products still are expected to continue much larger than a year ago. Butter prices have shown little change since reaching their low point this spring. Continuation of this price trend would result in peak butter prices in December considerably under their 1936 and 1937 levels.

Retail price of butter remained unchanged at 33 cents a pound from August to September. This U. S. average price in September was only a half cent a pound above the June low point. Compared with last September, butter is down 6 cents a pound, evaporated milk is lower by half a cent a 14½ ounce can, and American cheese is 3½ cents a pound cheaper. Fresh milk prices, however, remain practically unchanged.

**POULTRY** Turkey supplies are expected to be larger than in 1937, but smaller than the big 1936 crop. Birds probably will average slightly heavier in weight than in 1937, and earlier marketings are in prospect. A larger than usual proportion of the crop probably will move to market prior to November and a smaller than usual proportion after December 1. U. S. Government grades for turkeys are Prime, Choice, and Commercial. Retail turkey prices in New York in mid-October were slightly lower than a year earlier.

Seasonal increase in marketings of other poultry is in prospect during the remainder of 1938 and supplies still probably will be much bigger than a year earlier. Roasters, chickens weighing over 3½ pounds, comprise the bulk of chicken marketings during the last quarter of the year. Low point in chicken prices ordinarily comes in De-

cember. Average U. S. retail price of roasting chickens in September was 4.5 cents a pound less than a year ago, and the lowest for this month since 1935.

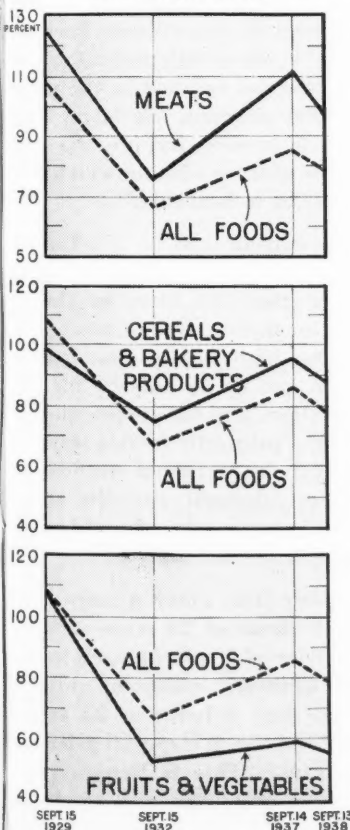
## CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Large supplies have been a major factor behind the decline in prices of most canned items during the past year. In September the cost of canned fruits and vegetables was at its lowest level since the end of 1933 and 8 percent below its peak level of last summer. Compared with last September canned corn, string beans, and peas are down about 1 cent for No. 2 size can. Canned peaches are 2 cents lower for a No. 2½ size can, and pineapple is down about 1 cent. Supplies of canned vegetables during the 1938-39 marketing year probably will be only slightly larger than the relatively large supplies of the season just ended. Much smaller supplies of tomatoes, tomato products, asparagus, and spinach more than offset other major items.

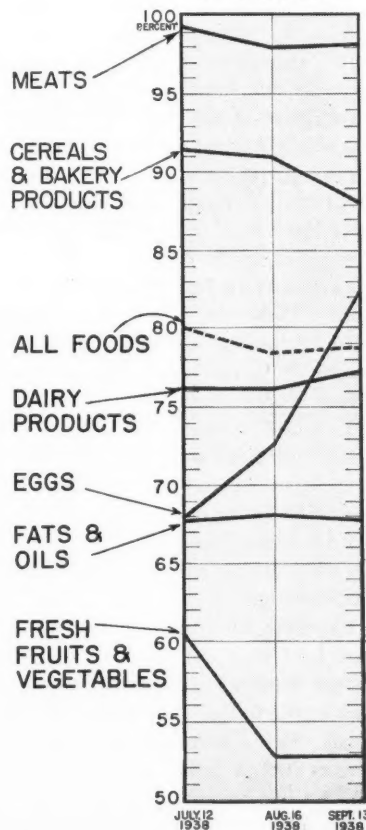
## CHANGES IN RETAIL FOOD COSTS

(1923-1925 = 100)

### A PERSPECTIVE



### A CLOSE-UP



**FRESH FRUITS** Orange season for 1938-39 opened in late September when first shipments from Florida and Texas moved to market. First winter or navel oranges from California are not expected until early November. Until then, however, California will continue shipping the remaining summer or Valencia oranges.

Retail orange prices have been relatively low all this year largely due to a record size crop. The seasonal price increase, which generally occurs from early in the year through October, has been much smaller than usual. In mid-September retail prices were 15 cents a dozen less than a year ago and the lowest for September since 1933. Prices generally decline during the last 2 months of the year as supplies increase. The present low level of prices will tend to reduce the amount of the seasonal decline.

Supplies of fruits other than citrus usually decrease after October, and prices consequently move up. Fruit prices have been relatively low this year. Apples, for example, are retailing at about the same as in 1937, despite a crop one-third smaller than a year earlier.

OCTOBER 24, 1938

**18 MEATS** Supply situation remains unchanged and outlook still is for a seasonal increase in total supplies, and for supplies much larger than in 1937 during the remainder of the year. Prices generally go down during the last quarter of the year as meat becomes more plentiful.

Retail prices of all meat cuts except fresh pork, veal, and leg of lamb declined from August through September. Meat prices are much lower than last year's high level which resulted from the reduction in supplies caused by the drought.

Lamb cuts are down from 21½ to 5 cents a pound; beef is from 5 to 6 cents a pound cheaper, and pork is from 3 to 7 cents a pound lower. Pork prices are back to their 1934 level. While beef prices are back to their level of 1935, they are still higher than they were in 1936.

**FRESH VEGETABLES** Sweet potatoes, cabbage, onions, potatoes, celery, generally are cheapest during October and November when supplies come from the late producing States. Cranberry prices usually hit bottom in November. During November marketings of brussels sprouts and Long Island (New York) cauliflower, usually reach their peak, and supplies of parsnips, turnips and rutabagas are only slightly under their peak of the previous month. Supplies of most vegetables have been larger than a year ago, and are expected to continue so through the remainder of 1938.

Retail prices of vegetables in mid-September were from 2 to 13 percent cheaper than last September. Vegetable prices generally go up after November.

#### **NEW SHRINKAGE RULES FOR COTTON CONSUMERS**

[Concluded from page 9]

carry a shrinkage guarantee on their labels.

Second, while the Commission has authority to enforce the rules, the support of this enforcement work by consumers is of great value, if not indispensable. Use in interstate commerce of the unfair practices prohibited in these rules is a violation of law and may be the basis of proceedings by the

Commission. But a sure way to guarantee respect for the rules is for consumers to join in their support. If a garment does not live up to claims made on labels, consumers should complain to the store where they have made their purchase. Then, having made their complaint to the store, they should also report the violation to the Federal Trade Commission.

As for advice when consumers go buying, experts of the American Home Economics Association believe that if consumers insist on cotton goods that are guaranteed not to shrink more than 2 percent, they will be on the safe side. If the maximum guaranteed shrinkage is more than this, they should begin to make allowances by buying larger sizes, or by buying more yard goods.

#### **FEED BUYERS ARE LUCKY**

[Concluded from page 12]

either to pay a brand tax or to pay a tonnage tax, or in some cases to pay both. Under the brand tax manufacturers, before they may sell their feedstuffs in the State, must register their brand with the State feed control officer. The money collected from brand registration in some States has been not only large enough to finance enforcement of the feed control laws but also to support State experimental farm experiments in search of better feedstuffs. Tonnage taxes are based upon the amount of feedstuffs sold by a manufacturer in the State. Usually the manufacturer buys stamps from the State. Then every bag, sack or container of feedstuff sold must be accompanied by a canceled stamp of the proper denomination.

Louisiana consumers, when they passed their Food and Drug Law, took a tip from the feed laws and incorporated into their law a brand registration fee by which they pay for the cost of maintaining a State Food and Drug administration.

But there are larger lessons in the feed laws than the one on how to finance food and drug laws. Beginning at the top of the alphabet, "A" stands for Awareness. Not until farmers became aware of their interests as producers were they able to get their producer laws passed. Going

down the alphabet, "B" stands for Benefits. When farmers, feed control officials, and feed manufacturers all understood that effective enforcement benefitted them all, opposition to the laws ceased. Finally in this alphabet "C" stands for Coordination: coordination between State and Federal agencies. Feed law effectiveness depends in a large degree on the existence of a Federal law as well as State laws. The 2 kinds of laws together join jurisdiction so neatly that there is no middle uncovered area where law evaders can seek sanctuary from both Federal and State laws.

#### **What Do YOU Think?**

HERE are some quotations from people who write about consumer buying problems. In your judgment are the statements TRUE or FALSE? Use them for springboards to lively discussion in your consumer group:

"Even women who understand how to mix their own creams and lotions prefer to pay more than the cost of ingredients because they like the smell, the looks, and the promise implied in the commercial product. It is an illusion, to be sure, but it is the substance of hope without which life would be unbearable."

"The consumer is . . . much more seriously ignorant as a buyer than he likes to think. The marketing system must protect his ignorance as best it can, but it can do so only by his co-operation, and the cooperation it secures primarily in two ways—through his personal confidence in the salesman and the store and through educating himself through advertising."

"Rather than enter a store and buy 9 items at 24 cents each, a cut price of 1 cent on each item, the ordinary customer would rather buy 8 items at 25 cents each and one at a special price of 16 cents. This is human psychology and little can be done about it."

# LIST YOUR ANSWERS HERE

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If you wish to compete in the weights and measures contest (see page 3) use this form in submitting your answers. Entries on this form only will be considered by the judges. Tear out this page and mail it to the *Consumers' Guide*, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

1. Check correct statement:  
(a) (b) (c) (d)
2. Check correct statement:  
(a) (b) (c) (d)
3. ....
4. ....
5. Check correct number:  
50 6 12 32 30
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10. Check correct statement:  
(a) (b) (c)
11. ....
12. Check correct number:  
2 3 4 8
13. Check correct number:  
8 14 3 20 2
14. Check correct statement:  
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(a) (b) (c) (d) (e)
16. Check correct statement:  
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38. Check correct statement:  
(a) (b) (c) (d)
39. Check correct statement:  
(a) (b) (c)
40. Check correct statement:  
(a) (b) (c) (d)

COMPLETE IN 20 WORDS  
OR LESS

"Consumers gain from honest and adequate weights and measures enforcement because \_\_\_\_\_

"Merchants gain from honest and adequate weights and measures enforcement because \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

I am not an official or employee of any Weights and Measures office, or of the National Bureau of Standards. Check here.



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